

Basic Detail Report



Vision Quest

Vessel number

HV000245

Date

1999

Primary Maker

Van De Stadt

Description

VISION QUEST was built by Hart Marine near Melbourne from 1995 to 1999 for Vinny Lauwers, who also worked on the construction and fit-out of the yacht over this period. It is based on a stock plan called a Samoan class,

designed by the internationally known Dutch firm of naval architects Van de Stadt. The 14.63 m (48 ft) long hull is fibreglass reinforced wood core construction, and Lauwers customised the yacht for the voyage. Below decks Lauwers organised the layout to suit a wheelchair and ensured things were placed to reduce the amount of movement required, both between areas and then within each location such as the galley or navigation station. The principal idea was to have things function with minimal movement and effort. He applied the same concept to the deck layout so that the sail controls for the cutter rig were grouped together within easy reach. To move between the deck and the accommodation below the companionway was fitted with steps that became seats and worked as a hand operated elevator or escalator. A simple and robust solution, it was typical of the overall approach. Lauwers was severely injured early in 1990, however prior to his motorbike accident he had been a keen sailor for more than ten years, with wide experience including offshore sailing. As an able-bodied sailor he had often thought of sailing around the world. In the recovery period after his accident he focused on his love of the sea and was determined to go sailing again. After watching a video of Kay Cottee's record breaking circumnavigation in BLACKMORE'S FIRST LADY (HV000084) he was inspired to see if he could do the same, as a paraplegic. It took him seven years to prepare, and during this time he gained valuable experience sailing yachts offshore, including two Sydney to Hobart yacht races. His experiences informed the layout of VISION QUEST. Early in 1999 the yacht was launched and as a trial voyage he sailed in the Melbourne to Osaka double-handed event with fellow disabled sailor Graham Raynor. VISION QUEST left Port Phillip, Victoria on 20 December 1999, and 40,000 km and almost eight months later he returned, on 12 August 2000. He encountered severe weather, especially around the Falkland Islands, and during the voyage he hurt his back again. Along the way he also had rigging, electrical and steering problems, but despite the hardships the voyage was an outstanding success. He was able to keep in touch with family and supporters via radio and email connections, and received regular weather advice from forecaster Bob Leighton. In 2001 Lauwers was recognised as the International Disabled Sports Person of the year at the

Laureus World Sports awards in Monaco. In 2009 VISION QUEST remained in good condition still with the customized general arrangement Lauwers used for the circumnavigation.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 14.63 m x 4.57 m x 2.44 m, 13.29 tonnes (48 ft x 15 ft x 8 ft, 13.5 tons)